

# AN ILLUSTRATED MUGHAL MANUSCRIPT FROM AHMADABAD

by

R. Pinder-Wilson

The Mughal school of painting owed its origin and development to the enthusiastic patronage of the Emperor Akbar. The imperial library set the standards for the lesser establishments of the great Mughal officers. Since these could not command the resources of the emperor, their productions lack the inspiration and finish of the great imperial books. Nevertheless it was through these more modest works that the canons of Mughal taste and style came to be disseminated in the provinces where paintings were executed which have been characterised in recent years as "popular Mughal".<sup>1</sup> These in their turn contributed to the creation and development of the independent schools of Rajasthan such as those of Bundi and Mewar.

It has yet to be shown whether "popular Mughal" paintings were produced earlier than the period of Jahāngīr. This is not the case, however, with Mughal paintings made for court circles. There is evidence that private establishments were already at work in the last years of Akbar. If little is known of the extent of Hindu patronage in this period, we have precise, albeit exiguous, information regarding Muslim patrons. There are two illustrated manuscripts which are expressly stated to have been made in Allahabad and their dates fall within those years during which Prince Salīm, the future Emperor Jahāngīr, had his official residence in that city.<sup>2</sup> They may well be, therefore, the products of his own establishment.

We are particularly well informed by contemporary writers about the

library establishment of 'Abd al-Rahīm Khān-i Khānān (1556-1627), son of Akbar's tutor and guardian, Bayram Khān.<sup>3</sup> Apart from scribes and bookbinders, no less than three painters are mentioned as being in his service. Moreover, there still exists a manuscript of the Persian translation of the *Ramayana* made for him from Akbar's own copy between A.H. 996 (1587/88) and 1007 (1598/99).<sup>4</sup> At least fifteen artists contributed the one hundred and thirty surviving miniatures. We are not informed where this manuscript was made but since it was copied from the original made for Akbar the most likely city would be either Lahore or Agra.<sup>5</sup>

An illustrated manuscript now preserved in the British Museum,

*Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections*, Bombay 1961, plate 8: and (b) a manuscript of the *Raj Kanvar*, a romance, copied at Allahabad in 1012 (A.D. 1603) by the scribe Burhān, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (no. 37).

<sup>3</sup> M. Mahfusul Haq, "The Khan Khanan and his painters", *Islamic Culture*, 1931, pp. 621-30; S. A. Zafar Nadvi, "Libraries during Muslim Rule in India", *Islamic Culture*, 1945, pp. 333 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington; see R. Ettinghausen, op. cit., plates 3 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> Apart from Allahabad, illustrated manuscripts in which the copyist has expressly named the city where the work was completed are listed hereunder:

## Fathpur Sikri

*Gulistan* of Sa'di copied by Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Kashmīrī, now in Royal Asiatic Society of London (no. 258): see Leigh Ashton, *The Art of India and Pakistan, Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Art, London, 1947-8* p. 143 and colour pl. 121, pl. 119; J. V. S. Wilkinson, *Mughal Painting*, London 1948, plate 4 (colour).

## Agra

*Nafahāt al-Uns* of Jāmi, copied in A.D. 1603, now in British Museum (Or. 1362): H. Goetz, *Bilderatlas zur Kulturgeschichte Indiens in der Grossmogulzeit*, Berlin 1930, Tafel 23, Abb. 64, Taf. 33, Abb. 87, Taf. 34, Abb. 90, Taf. 38, Abb. 112; E. Wellesz, *Akbar's Thought reflected in Mogul painting*, London 1952, p. 41, pl. 35; D. Barrett and B. Gray, *Painting of India*, Geneva 1963, pp. 96, 99 and illustr. p. 97.

## Lahore

*Dīwān* of Anṣārī copied in 1588, now in Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, U.S.A.; see S. C. Welch, *The art of Mughal India, Painting and precious objects*, New York 1964. *Bahārīstān* of Jāmi copied by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Zarrīn Qalam in 1595, now in Bodleian Library (Elliot Collection, no. 254); see I. Ashton, op. cit., p. 146, no. 651, pl. 124 with bibliography to which add Barrett and Gray, op. cit. pp. 87-9, 96, 102 and plate on p. 88. *Anwār-i Suhaylī* copied by Mawlānā 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Harawī in 1596-7, now in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares, India: see S. C. Welch, op. cit.; *Manuscripts from Indian Collections, descriptive catalogue of an exhibition of selected manuscript from Indian Collections in honour of the XXV International Congress of Orientalists*, New Delhi 1964, p. 102.

<sup>1</sup> See Karl Khandalawala, Moti Chandra and Pramod Chandra, *Miniature Painting, a catalogue of the Exhibition of the Sri Motichand Khajanchi Collection held by the Lalit Kala Akademi*, 1960, New Delhi 1960, pp. 14 ff; and Pramod Chandra, "Ustad Salivahana and the development of Popular Mughal Art", *Lalit Kala*, 1960.

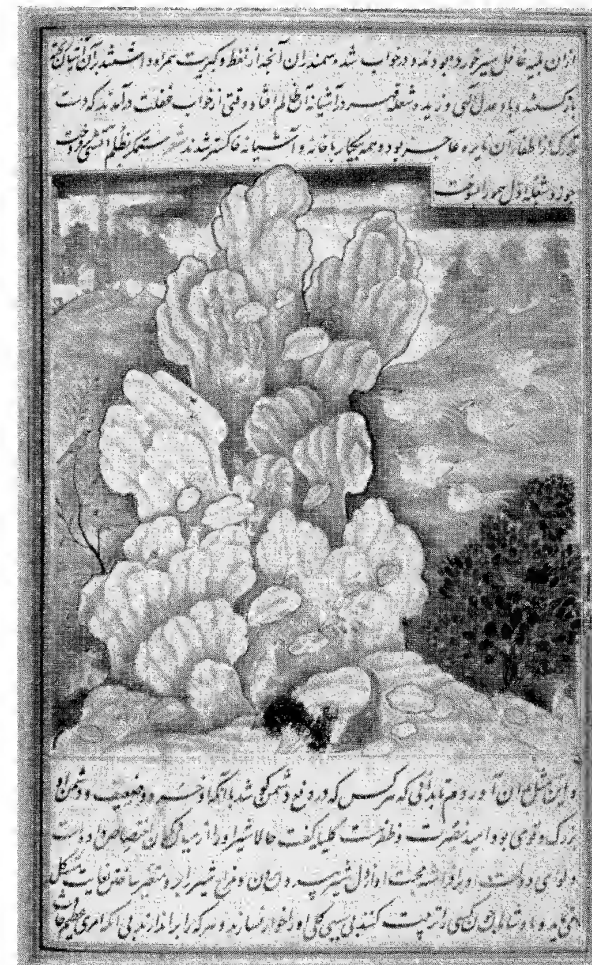
<sup>2</sup> These are (a) a manuscript of the *ghazals* of Amīr Najm al-Dīn Ḥasan Dihlavi completed in Allahabad on the 27th Muḥarram 1011 H. (A.D. 1602) by Mir 'Abd Allāh Kātib, now in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, U.S.A., see R. Ettinghausen, *Paintings of the*



103. Folio 112a

provides evidence that at Ahmadabad, the capital city of the province of Gujerat, there was a library studio producing Mughal paintings in the closing years of Akbar's reign. This is a manuscript of the *Anwār-i Suhaylī*, the Persian version of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, composed by Ḥusayn Wā'iz-i Kāshifī at the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup> It has 207 folios including 43 miniatures. The size of the page is  $11\frac{5}{8}$  by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches and of the gold ruled text area  $8\frac{3}{4}$  by 5 inches. There are 21 lines to the page.

<sup>6</sup> Or. 6317, acquired in 1902.



104. Folio 38b

There is an illuminated *sarlawh* on folio 1 verso and gold floral decoration surrounding the colophon on folio 207 recto. The manuscript copied in a fine *ta'līq*, was completed in A.H. 1009 (1600/1601) at Ahmadabad by Taymūr Ḥamus (? حموس). With the exception of the whole page miniature on folio 124 verso each miniature contains a portion of text. The most characteristic shape of the miniatures is one in which the principle part of the scene occupies about two thirds of the height of the text area while a narrow vertical area is added so that the complete miniature assumes the various positions of a L. (figs. 103, 105, 108). The miniatures are listed below.

No.	Folio	Subject
1	11r.	A hermit informs King Dabshalim of the treasure hidden in the cave (Eastwick, p. 33 ff.) <sup>7</sup> (fig. 103).
2	15v.	The eagle and the falcon contest for the pigeon (Eastwick, p. 47).
3	20r.	The hawk wins the quarry from the royal falcon and thus secures the king's favour (Eastwick, p. 62).
4	23r.	King Dabshalim visits the Brahman Bidpai in the mountain cave on Sarandīb (Eastwick, p. 70).
5	29r.	The monkey is injured while presuming to perform a carpenter's work (Eastwick, p. 86).
6	31v.	Ghānim carries the stone lion to the top of the mountain and is acclaimed sovereign by the citizens (Eastwick, p. 91).
7	38v.	The sparrows enlist the help of the salamanders in burning the falcon and his nest (Eastwick, p. 111 et seq.) (fig. 104).
This is the smallest of the miniatures. The trees on the horizon are "stippled"; the ground is washed with horizontal stripes. Green "stippling" on rocks is intended to indicate lichen. The white birds with long tails on the right have gold crests; other birds are vermillion and brown.		
8	41r.	The crab kills the old and treacherous heron (Eastwick, p. 117 et seq.).
9	43v.	The hare by a ruse causes the lion to be drowned in a well (Eastwick, p. 124 et seq.) (fig. 105). The miniature is rubbed in places. The hillocks are rendered in ranging from green to yellow with heavy contour lines. The brickwork of the well is mauve.
10	52v.	A leopard instead of a fox is caught in the hunter's snare (Eastwick, p. 151 et seq.).
11	54v.	The camel sacrifices itself to the lion and his subjects, the crow, the wolf and the fox (Eastwick, p. 153 et seq.).
12	56v.	The tortoise is borne by his companions, the geese, into the sky (Eastwick, p. 159 et seq.).
13	57v.	The Simurgh causes the genius of the sea to restore the fledglings of the sandpipers (Eastwick, p. 164).

<sup>7</sup> The *Anvar-i Suhaili*; or the *Lights of Canopus* . . . translated into prose and verse by Edward B. Eastwick, F.R.S. etc., Hertford (England) 1854.



105. Folio 43b

No.	Folio	Subject
14	59v.	The monkeys rebuff the bird when it tries to convince them that the sugar cane is not really burning and so will not keep them warm (Eastwick, p. 170 f.).
15	61v.	The mongoose devours the frog which persuaded him to eat the snake (Eastwick, p. 174 f.).
16	64r.	The bear casts a stone onto the face of his friend the gardener in order to ward off the flies (Eastwick, p. 180 et seq.).

No.	Folio	Subject
17	68r.	The fox having lost the fowl and the skin having been carried off by the kite, dashes his head against the stones in his despair (Eastwick, p. 193 et seq.).
18	78v.	The blind man who mistook a snake for his whip (Eastwick, p. 209 et seq.).
19	86r.	A hawk tears out the eye of the falconer who had calumniated his master's wife (Eastwick, p. 241 et seq.).
20	89r.	The pigeons caught in the fowler's net (Eastwick, p. 250 et seq.).
21	93r.	The treacherous hawk after professing friendship, devours the partridge (Eastwick, p. 258 et seq.).
22	96r.	The fox by a ruse enables the camel driver to destroy the snake which he had saved from the fire (Eastwick, p. 264 et seq.).
23	99v.	The hunter having shot a deer is killed by the boar which he had slain. A wolf enjoying the prospect of three carcasses is itself killed when, gnawing through the hunter's bow string, the arrow is released (Eastwick, p. 275 et seq.).
24	107r.	The crow, the mouse and the deer cause the tortoise to escape from the hunter's bag (Eastwick, p. 295).
25	114r.	The hare Bihruz induces the elephants to refrain from drinking in the fountain of the moon (Eastwick, p. 315 et seq.) (fig. 106). One elephant is white, three are grey-black with buff coloured trunks. The pool is rendered by white washes on a grey ground. The rocks on the horizon are mauve. Tufts of grass grow on a yellow-green ground.
26	116r.	The partridge and the quail ask the pious cat to settle their dispute. The cat after offering some empty sentiments, devours them (Eastwick, p. 325 et seq.).
27	124v.	Maymun the monkey entices the bears into the desert where they die of the heat thereby restoring their island to the monkeys (Eastwick, p. 345 et seq.) (fig. 107). The only whole page miniature in the book. The scorching desert is effectively depicted by the natural tone of the paper save for light washes of yellow-brown and by the absence of a defined horizon. The sun in the top right is golden. The bears are grey-black.

No.	Folio	Subject
28	127r.	The crows set fire to the nest of the owls (Eastwick, p. 355 et seq.).
29	129r.	The old and feeble snake abases himself before the king of the frogs (Eastwick, p. 361 et seq.).
30	134r.	The king, the monkey and the wise thief (Eastwick, p. 376 et seq.).
31	137v.	The monkey Kardun upbraids the tortoise for having deceived him for his friendship solely in order to secure a monkey's heart which has been prescribed as the only cure for his wife's sickness (Eastwick, p. 392 et seq.).
32	140v.	The crafty fox ensnares an ass for the old and feeble lion (Eastwick, p. 393 et seq.).
33	144v.	The devotee kills the faithful mongoose which had saved his son from the snake (Eastwick, p. 409 et seq.).
34	145v.	The king kills his favourite hawk for spilling the poisoned water which he was about to drink (Eastwick, p. 413 et seq.).
35	152v.	The rat releases the cat from the hunter's snare (Eastwick, p. 425 et seq.).
36	153v.	The crow seizes the mouse which was fettered by a string of friendship (Eastwick, p. 439 et seq.).
37	157r.	The cranes identify the thieves who murdered the dervish bound for Mecca (Eastwick, p. 449).
38	171r.	The jackal Farisa tells how the lion king Kamgin is to clear his name from the calumnies of his enemies (Eastwick, p. 502).
39	175r.	The lynx observes the evil inflicted by creatures on each other (Eastwick, p. 516 et seq.).
40	177v.	The greedy boar is killed while climbing the fig tree (Eastwick, p. 526).
41	179v.	The crane gets stuck in the mud while trying to hunt the quail (Eastwick, p. 536 et seq.).
42	183r.	The crow who tried to walk like the partridge (Eastwick, p. 546 et seq.).
43	187v.	Sulayman surrounded by the angels and divs consults the heron whether or not he should drink the Water of Life (Eastwick, p. 562 et seq.) (fig. 108). The grey and white heron stands on one of the feet of the throne. Sulayman is clothed in a gold and pink



striped *jāma*. His golden crown with red *kulāh* is set against a gold flame nimbus. On the throne is a blue cushion. The angels have variously coloured wings and golden crowns. The plumage of the birds is variegated: the peacock's tail feathers being gold with "turquoise" eyes.

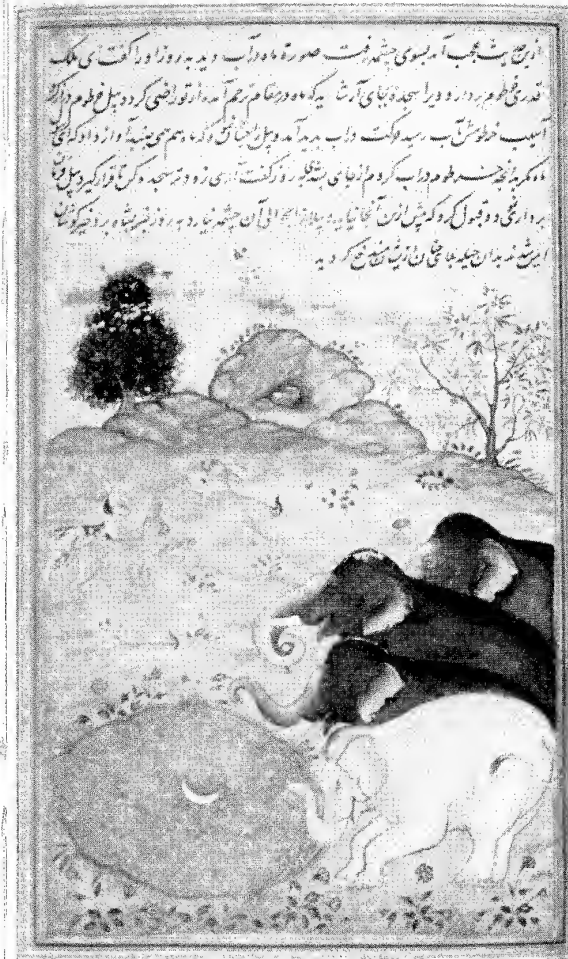
The miniatures appear to be the work of a single artist who was more familiar with the Mughal style of the two previous decades rather than with the developments that were taking place in the imperial library at the turn of the century. While his colours are typical of the Mughal palette, he attempts neither tonal differentiation in his landscape nor the modelling of faces. He adheres to the Mughal convention of the high horizon, strews his ground with tufts of grass or flowering plants, or uses stippling for ground and trees. Usually white clouds rendered naturalistically adorn his skies. If his human figures are the stock-in-trade of Mughal painting, his animals are well observed. If his style is somewhat attenuated, he has achieved several striking compositions notably those of the bears in the desert (fig. 107) and of Ghānim carrying the stone lion up the mountain.

<sup>8</sup> Illustrated manuscripts and detached miniatures known to me are:

The *Anwār-i Suhaylī* copied by Muḥibb Allāh b. Ḥasan in 1570, now in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; see L. Ashton, op. cit., p. 142, no. 636, colour pl. F, and pl. 119; Goetz, op. cit., Taf. 26, Abb. 72 (folio 172); H. Goetz, *Geschichte der indischen Miniaturmalerei*, Berlin 1934, fig. 2; Wilkinson, op. cit., pl. 4 (colour); Barrett and Gray, op. cit., pp. 81, 2, 4 and plate (colour) on p. 80 (folio 183v.). The *Anwār-i Suhaylī* copied in 1596-7 by Mawlānā 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Harawī at Lahore, now in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares; see note 5 above.

The *Anwār-i Suhaylī* copied in 1610, now in the British Museum (Add. 18,579). Two of the miniatures bear the date 1013 H. (1605). See J. V. S. Wilkinson, *The Lights of Canopus, Anwar i Suhaili*, London 1929; A. Coomaraswamy, "Notes on Mughal Painting", *Artibus Asiae*, 1927, no. 3; Goetz, *Bilderatlas*, Taf. 23, Abb. 65, Taf. 33, Abb. 89, Taf. 36, Abb. 95, Taf. 44, Abb. 126; Sir T. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, Oxford 1928, pl. 63b.

The *'Iyār-i Dānīsh*, an incomplete manuscript of which 52 leaves are in the Sir Cowasji Collection, Bombay and 103 leaves with 96 miniatures in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; see K. Khandalavala, "Five miniatures in the collection of Sir C. Jehangir Bart., Bombay", *Marg*, v, p. 30 f. and pl. C opp. p. 29; Ashton, op. cit., p. 144 f. and pl. 123; Sir T. W. Arnold and J. V. S. Wilkinson, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty, a catalogue of the Indian Miniatures*, 1936, pp. 12-21, pls. 38-47; *Marg*, xi (1958), illustration of the lion and the jackal opp. p. 21; K. Khandalavala and M. Chandra, *Miniatures and sculptures from the collection of the late Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Bart.*, Bombay 1965, p. 17, no. 7.

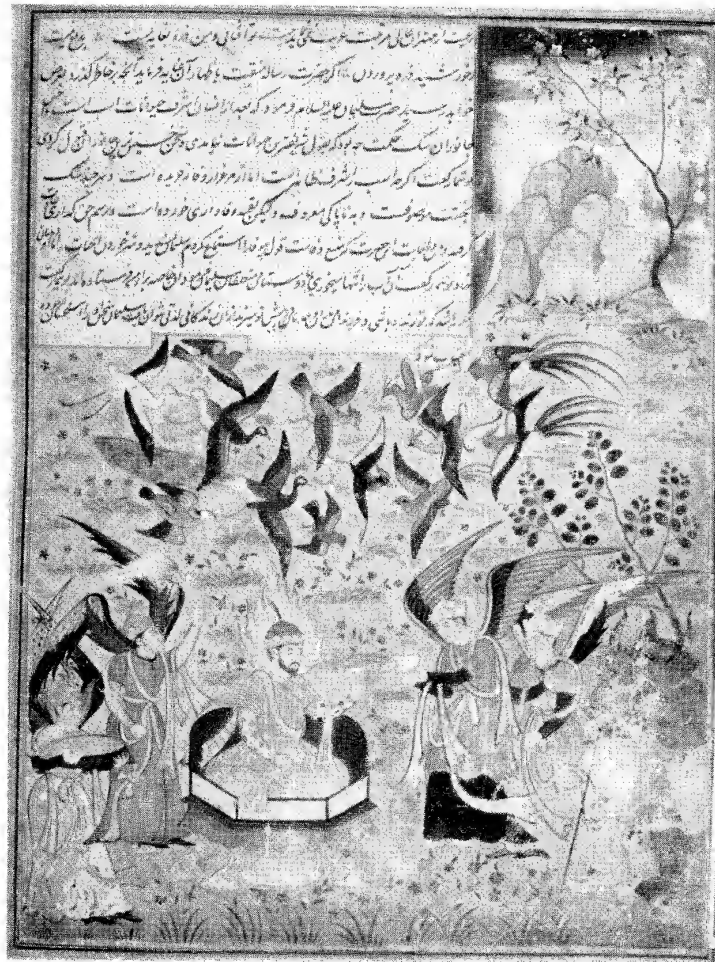


106. Folio 114a



107. Folio 124b

Moreover he does not seem to be a mere copyist since none of the subjects he has chosen to illustrate resemble the same subjects in other known manuscripts either of the *Anwār-i Suhaylī* or of the *'Iyār-i Dānīsh*, the Persian translation of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* made by Abu'l-Faḍl.<sup>8</sup>



108. Folio 187b

At the time our manuscript was made, Gujerat was under the governorship of Akbar's foster brother, Mīrzā 'Azīz Koka who, however resided at Agra leaving the actual government of the province to his sons. Neither he nor his family are known to have patronised painting and we cannot ascertain for whom our manuscript was made. 'Abd al-Rahīm Khān-i Khānān was twice governor of Gujerat, from 1575 to 1578 and from 1584 to 1589. It seems more than likely that during his years in Ahmadabad he attracted artistic talent to that city thereby giving an impetus to the subsequent creation of other establishments. But the principle interest

of our manuscript is in providing incontestable evidence that Mughal painting was already established in Ahmadabad late in Akbar's reign. Ahmadabad may well have had its share in contributing to the dissemination of the Mughal style in the courts of Rajasthan.